

Remarks:

This amendment is submitted in an earnest effort to advance this case to issue without delay.

The specification has been amended to eliminate some minor obvious errors. Similarly, the claims have been amended to overcome the §112 rejections. No new matter whatsoever has been added.

The claims are rejected on applicant's earlier patent, US 4,651,508 of Hannen (hereinafter Hannen '508). This reference shows, as described in column 3 at lines 10ff, an air-curtain device comprised of a nozzle 17 above the object being wrapped and to one side of it that directs air streams 22 crosswise horizontally above the object to an intake grate 20 of an exhaust fan 31. The intent here is to eliminate the hot air rising around the object 2.

There is no discussion anywhere in this reference of a foil "projecting vertically past an end of the stack" as defined in the preamble of claim 1, and the air curtain 22 of Hannen '508 is clearly too widely spaced from the object 12 to have any effect on it even if there were one. Furthermore the nozzle 17 of Hannen '508 is not "centered vertically on the stack" but is clearly to one side of it, and it has nothing resembling an "annular array of outlets." Because of these structural differences, Hannen '508

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cannot be used to form a valid §102 rejection of amended main claim 7.

Since the air curtain formed by the jets 22 serves purely to carry off hot air rising convectively around the object 12 being packed, it would not be obvious or logical to use it for another purpose, especially when no other problem or purpose is mentioned in the application. Not only would the system of Hannen '508 not work to stand up a foil end as it is heated, so that it shrinks back smoothly, but there is not a scintilla of suggestion in Hannen '508 that this could or should be done, or that there is even any problem with how a projecting end portion, which apparently does not exist with this system is dealt with. A §103 rejection on Hannen '508 is similarly impossible.

The other cited but not applied reference, US patent 4,616,471 also of Hannen (hereinafter Hannen '471), is even further afield. It has a blower 20 that draws air in, not out, and that serves to pull in any lower overhanging portion. Thus the blower 20 of Hannen '471 operates oppositely to the nozzle system of this invention. Thus at best Hannen '471 teaches away from the instant invention. This reference adds nothing to the teachings of Hannen '508 that could form a valid §102 or §103 rejection.

The remaining cited but not applied references are no better than Hannen '508.

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For these reasons all the claims in the case are clearly in condition for allowance. Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

If only minor problems that could be corrected by means of a telephone conference stand in the way of allowance of this case, the examiner is invited to call the undersigned to make the necessary corrections.

Respectfully submitted,
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Enclosure: None.

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